[c 2002]

Hunt's Tavern of stage-coach days. From 1829 to 1843 it was the Northfield Academy of Useful Knowledge. It is now known as "The Beehive"

A Narrative

By

Hugh Eastman

Northfield Historical Society

"Northfield Never Had Much Of Anything Did It?"

Remembrances of My 65 Years In Northfield

By

Hubert Jesse Eastman

Hugh Eastman was born in Haverhill, N.H. on March 28, 1915 the son of John Eldridge Eastman and Cora Mary (Batchelder) Eastman. John was a farmer and night watchman in North Haverhill. Hugh was named for his two Grandfathers, Hubert Eastman and Jesse Jesseman.

Hugh grew up in North Haverhill, attending grammar school there and in 1933 graduated from Woodsville High School. He attended and graduated from Mount Hermon School For Boys in 1936. He then went on to graduate from the Chicago Trade School in 1937. He then moved back to Northfield and was employed by the Northfield Schools. He has always had an interest in history and we all benefit from his interesting and often comical stories about his 65 years in his beloved Northfield.

This talk and the following 'Conversation: Hugh Eastman and Friends' was recorded on tape by Ross and Carolyn Spencer on October 2, 2001. The tapes were then sent to Paul H. Spaulding in Cherry Valley, NY. They were then painstakingly transcribed over a period of many weeks by Paul who then e-mailed the transcriptions back to the Spencers. Ross and Carolyn then did editing, took pictures and put this little booklet together to become a permanent part of Northfield's history in the Northfield Historical Society.

A Narrative by HUGH EASTMAN

October 2, 2001

The reason for this speech that I'm going to give was that I attended a dinner in the Town Hall about two years ago and two gentlemen across from me were talking about the town, and one says to the other: "Northfield never had much of anything." And they sort of ran the town down a little bit. Finally, I says, "Excuse me, but I could tell you a lot of stuff about the town." And the fellows said, "OK, go ahead." And so, this is what I told them. I didn't tell them this as a complete speech.

We had 11 gas stations in town, and this is from the area of the New Hampshire border to the Erving state line on Route 63. We had Peter's Gulf station, which was right near the outdoor theater. Jordan's Esso, Buffum's Texaco, Hotel Garage, they sold Standard Oil, Spencer's Socony, Slate's Gulf, which was also known as Bill's Gulf Station, Whitney's Sonoco, Morgan sold Sonoco, Stern's Garage on the corner of 63 and 10 sold Esso gas, and Hammond's and Tenny's both had stations, they sold Socony gas.

We had three automobile sales here in town at one time. Jordan's sold Chevys; they were located where the 5 Acre Farm is. We had Spencer's Ford. Morgan's sold International trucks, and Podlenski's sold a type of car which I could not find out what it was.

We had two banks: the Northfield National Bank was in the Town Hall, located where the Town Clerk has her office and it was started by Elliot Spear and William Hoehn. And then there was the Winchester National Bank, which was located in the Bookstore, and my father-in-law, Leon Alexander was the bank man there for many years.

We had three inns in town: Northfield Hotel, Valley Vista, and there was a large hotel, a double decker, which was located where the Baptist Church is now. At one time, it was called the North Inn.

We had a Hospital. That was on the corner of Pine and Main.

We had a castle that was built by Mr. Shell, and was a very famous place for many years. It was quite a thing to see when you came along from East Northfield on the train to see this giant castle on the horizon.

We had four doctors in town: Doctors' True, Dean, Hubbard, and Wright. I especially remember Dr. Wright because my first wife was just in labor, going to have a child, and her doctor had figured his vacation, and she was about two months ahead of time. So I called up Dr. Wright at 5 o'clock in the morning and asked him if he could help me. And he said," I'll take a shower, and I'll see you in the hospital." (Can't make out the rest)

We had three insurance agencies. We had Powell's, which at one time was called the A.P. Fitt Agency, Roy Fish, and Joseph Colton.

We had two lawyers in town. They were a Mr. Rankin, who lived on Highland Avenue, and Charles Webster, who lived in the center of town.

We had three barber shops. One on Parker Avenue, Mr. Glutney, which was in the little house next to the telephone place, and in the Bookstore building. The one in the Bookstore building had quite a time, and he was notorious for the different positions, which he would get into when he shaved you or gave you a haircut. This was sort of, well it was due to a little, you know, he tipped his hand.

We had two oil companies: S.E. Johnson, and F.M. Dunnell. Which was quite a difference from now, because I counted the other day at least 12 oil companies deliver oil in the town of Northfield.

We had a sawmill down in Mill Brook Road. Two ice companies, Sheldon Brothers had their own pond, and it was in use until 1936, when we had a flood when the dam broke. The ice business was deteriorating so much that they decided to let it go. And then Dean Williams furnished ice for many years, and he worked out of the Brattleboro Ice Company.
We had three bakery deliveries. They used to come to your house usually Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, or Saturday. They were Bond Bread, Cushman's Bakery, and Hathaway Bakery.

We had an A&P Store, which was located down on the lower end of town. It was a good store. It was at one time where the IGA is now, but they moved down to the large building where Mim's Convenience Store is now..

Charles Stearns had a clothing store. Fred Irish had a fish market with his groceries.

We had two drug stores. One was where the Northfield Cafe is now, that was run by Harry Gingras, which many of us remember. And then Duffy Lewis had a drug store, one the north end of town, near the Holloway's hardware place. Duffy was quite a fellow. He didn't mind telling the way he felt about you. I had a dollar check from one of the faculty, and I wanted him to cash it, and he said well, if you want to get cash, you can go somewhere else. I'm not a bank. So I guess that was that.

He did have what they called Lewis' Annex, which was up on the Seminary Campus, and I'll always remember that. My good friends Ralph and Marion Livernoise lived there for many years. And also at the time there was an ice cream place. It had the old-fashioned ice cream chairs and I had my first date with my first wife there. So it was quite a place.

We had one newspaper, the Northfield Press, which was run by Mr. Hoehn for many years. And it was printed in a building just south of the Unitarian Church.

We have one funeral parlor, and that is unique in that this year it celebrated it's one-hundredth anniversary. And it's been in the same family continuously. It was started by Mr. George Kidder, and then there were three generations later. There are many stories about that. And one story I remember especially, it won't take long, was that there was a man died up on the mountain. And so, Mr. Kidder was asked to come up and fix the body. And so he dressed up; Mrs. Kidder got his good suit out, and he went up in a horse

and buggy, and a casket. And the lady of the house showed Mr. Kidder where the body was, and he said he would fix the man up, and then he'd like to have the family come and see it. So when he got him ready, and the family come in, and the wife said to Mr. Kidder, " I don't remember that he had a suit like this." And George says, "Oh my Gosh," he says, " I hung my new suit coat on a chair, and I guess I must have picked up the wrong one." Of course as a little aside, you know when they embalm a man, usually they cut the back right up through, so that was his suit.

We have a Masonic Hall and Lodge here in town that celebrated their two-hundredth anniversary in 1996. We have one of the oldest Grange buildings and office in the state, and we have the Kiwanis that's been here in town for many years.

We have three private schools along this route. We have, I'm from the old school, so I call it Northfield Seminary. And then at one time there was for quite a while, there was the Northfield Ladies Academy, which was in a building just south of the present fire station. And then we had Linden Hill, down on the South Mountain.

We had one high school, some of us old-timers remember that, which is now part of the grammar school system. We had five grammar schools; we had Pine Street School, and that was in front of the Homestead on Main Street at one time and then moved up to Pine Street. Then we had the Center School, and then we had the school across that burned where the fire station is now. And then we had numbers 3 and 4, down towards the Farms.

We had two plumbers in town. One was Charlie Johnson, the other one was W.D. Miller, usually everyone called him Bill Miller. And they were here in town for a long time.

We had a coal and cement dealership in town for many years that was run by G.O. Dunnell, Myron's father, and that was located on a side track, just below the railroad crossing near the cemetery. And they had their own siding in there. And he was quite a man, Mr. G.O. Dunnell. And I remember one time I ordered a ton of coal in my house, and I had a water pump down cellar, right near the coal bin. When I came home from Brattleboro from work that night, my mother-in-law said, " The water pump will not run." So I went down stairs to see, and by God when they put the coal in the cellar, somebody moved the chute in the wrong place. So we had to locate the water pump finally, and Mr. Dunnell was very upset about it and offered to pay.

We had many milk dealers. Especially we remember Tenney Farms. And some of us will remember "Waddy" who at one time was a famous cross-country runner. And he would jump out of the milk wagon, grab one or two quarts or whatever he was going to deliver, and always ran. It didn't make any difference what the weather was. And we had Hammond's and Russell's, and Lawrence Hammond told me one time he knew of seven different farms or dairies here in town over many years.

We had two dentists: Doctor Holton, and Doctor Thompson. Dr. Thompson lived near the Church, right near your place (pointing to Ross Spencer). But he had a special office in Hinsdale. And his prices weren't too bad. A good friend of mine, Walter Wozniak woke

up one morning with a severe tooth-ache. So his father gave him 50 cents, and told him to go and see Dr. Thompson. Walter said he went and rapped on the door, and Dr. Thompson said, "Well come right in here, I'm in a little hurry. I'm supposed to be in Hinsdale at 7:30, and it's 7:25." He says, "Open your mouth, kid." So Walter said he opened his mouth and before he could decide what was going on, Dr. Thompson had a pair of pliers in his mouth and pulled the tooth. And he says, "That will be 50 cents." Then he says, "You go on off to school." And that was that.

The Northfield Seminary, NMH, has a large auditorium that's been there for many years at the school. We've had quite a few very prominent people, so I want to just mention a few. We had Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians came here, and at that time, that must have been back in the 1940's. And I had a brother-in-law at that time who knew just everything that was going to go and happen. And he says, "Have you got the tickets?" And I said, "Yes." And he says, "Fred Waring will not be there, he wouldn't come to a small place like Northfield." "Well", I says, " They said he's coming" And he says, "I don't believe it, in fact, I won't go!" Well, his wife said, "Dick, you're going!" So they all, the whole family of us went there. When they raised the curtain, my brother-in-law said right out loud, "My God, it is Fred Waring!" The programs usually lasted from 8:30 until around ten. But at ten o'clock, Mr. Burdick came out and said, "I have a special message for all of you people, "Mr. Waring says this is one of the few places where he's played before young people and they haven't as he says 'raised hell'." "And he says you've been very good. Now would you like to have me and the orchestra play until midnight?" Well, you should have heard the noise. I thought maybe the auditorium would fall down, it was vibrating so. And he did, he played until 12 o'clock. And that was something very unusual for Mr. Waring. And amongst his group of players, he had eight Miss America soloists at different times.

And we had Ferrante and Tisher the two pianists. And they stayed at the Hillside Dormitory for supper. And as a surprise, they made a special arrangement and played a dedication music for Hannah, who was the dietitian at the kitchen. And that caused a lot of excitement. His first concert was in the auditorium here. And we had the Brothers Four, who were very famous at one time. And I believe at one time, they were connected with Lawrence Welk. And we had William Lyon Phelps, who came there with the understanding that he would speak a half hour. He was a famous orator from Yale University. He was so delightful, and people so encouraged, tickled to death to hear him, that he spoke for an hour and a half. And you could hear a pin drop there.

And lets see, what else. To top it all off, this last Sunday, we had Peter, Paul, and Mary, and they have been singing together for 41 years. And it reminded me of the old times, because the auditorium was packed. Very few students came, they were mostly out of town people, our age, or a little younger. Paul and his wife is the school chaplain, so this had been in the works for quite some time.

We had two presidents here in town. Theodore Roosevelt spoke in the auditorium. And it was kind of interesting. I asked Mr. Phil Porter, who used to be in charge of the farm at the hotel, what kind of protection he had. "Well," he said, "I'll tell you what they did.

They had a team of two horses, and we had a special man who had a double-barreled shot gun, and everybody, the wagon and horses were all ready down in the barn, and the man sat in the seat most of the evening, sometimes he might have dosed off. And he had the shot gun across his lap." And I said, "didn't they have anybody up there helping at the hotel?" He said no, he wanted to go to sleep. When Theodore Roosevelt was speaking, a man rushed into the auditorium and spoke to one of the selectmen who was on the platform with him, and there was a lot of whispering with people wondering what it was all about. So when Mr. Roosevelt stopped talking, the selectman got up and said, "I've just received notice that I'm a father of a son." And Theodore Roosevelt said, " Have you got a name for him?" And he said, "Yes, Theodore Roosevelt Pollen." And I have seen the paper, its in the family somewhere now, a certificate, and Theodore Roosevelt signed it.

Calvin Coolidge came one time at the invitation of the Masons and it wasn't really generally known that he was in town. And he spoke down to our lodge, and Mrs. M. P. Wood, who lived right near the old high school entertained him because Mr. Coolidge could not attend one of our meetings; he was not a Mason. And we asked her what she did to entertain him, and she said, "I didn't have to entertain him, he just set there. Never said a word."

I might just conclude this little 'jam around' with this saying that we had three men you don't hear too much about. One was Harry Haskell. He was our police chief, in fact, he was the whole police force. I asked him one day, I said, "Did anybody ever give you any trouble?" "Yeah," he says, "I come out of the IGA store", he says, " five fellows drove up, and they went in the store, and then came right out. And they said, "You the chief of police?" He said, "yes." And they said, "You ever shoot anybody?" And he said, "no." "Well," they says, "I see you have a .38 hanging there on your hip, and I bet you don't even know how to use it." And Harry says, "You don't think I do? You see that insulator up there?" Bang. He said that by the time he pulled his gun down, the five guys were getting back in their car and were headed back to Springfield.

We had a famous carpenter, he was one of two men. There was Lee Bolton, and Dana Leavis. Dana always had a story for me when I went to read his water meter. And I asked him one time, "How many houses did you ever build in Northfield?" And he said, "I build 51 houses in Northfield." And he said, "I had a lot of fun." He said, "We build one house, everyone one of them was a wooden house except one, that was a stucco house, on Highland Avenue. And that had quite a history. I called it a love house because the next door neighbor's wife was dying of cancer, and she had a nurse." And Dana came right out with the fact, and I won't explain it too much. He said, "Things got quite cozy, and finally she told the man, "You've got to build me a house." And he said, "Ok, what do you want for a house?" And she said, "I want a different house, I want a stucco house." Dana said that he didn't know anything about stucco work but he could work around it. There was a company in Brattleboro that did wonderful stucco work. So they build the house, and Dana did all the wood work. And he kind of laughed, he had a famous chuckle, and said, "That was a love house." He showed me one time the first place he ever built, he and Lee, his partner. It was a small camp up on the Ridge.

I'll conclude by telling you a little bit about a famous man who lived on the corner of Pine and Highland Avenue. Mr. Jack always wanted you to be sure that his name was Robert Bonner Jack. And I think he wanted to be like John D. Rockefeller because whenever we did any taxi work, or go to get groceries, he'd always give you a dime. Well, we had a new man who worked for us at the Hotel garage, and we did deliveries all around. And he was quite a jokester, so he took Mrs. Jack down to the store, and brought her back, carried her groceries in and got the check. Doctor Jack says, "This is for you, a dime." "That's for me?" He said, "Yes." "Well," he said, "I'll tell you what. "If you're in such a bad financial state, this is for you." And he passed it back. Well he hadn't been back to the garage very long before the telephone rang. And the next thing we know, Gordon Moody, the manager came over and said, " Who drove Mrs. Jack?" The fellow says, "I did." He said, "Did you get a tip?" He said, "Yeah, but gosh, it was only a dime. So I figured that she needed it or she needed it worse than I did." Gordon says, "Boy, that's the best one I've heard for a long time." And the fellow thought he was going to lose his job. And Gordon says that he's never had anything like that before. And I noticed that there was an article about the Pine Street School by several of the boys always reminded each other, "Don't hit a foul ball over on Dr. Jack's lawn, or you may have to leave it there."

I had a lot of fun driving for the schools over the years, and the funniest thing was when I was on the fourth ridge one time and I had a whole load of people in the station wagon going to the hotel. And I dropped one man off, and he came back and rushed up to me and said, "You know, I think there's a fire in that cottage." So I went back, and sure enough, there was a stream of smoke coming through the screening on the porch. And so I got the door open, I went in, and the lady had just done her ironing and left the iron on, and it was just beginning to flame on the ironing board cover. I could see a pail. I filled that, and put it on the fire, and as I was doing that, there was a woman's voice says, "Who's out there?" I said, "Hugh Eastman." She said, "What are you doing in my house?" She said, "I'm taking a shower. Don't you dare come in here!" I says, "I'm not coming in there, I'm just putting a fire out." "Oh", she says, "The heck with the fire, let it go, but don't you come into the house." I says, "Ok, goodbye." I put the fire out, and got back to the garage, and Gordon Moody came over, and said, "I hear you broke into a house." I said, "I didn't break into the house." I says, "I opened the door and smoke was pouring out, and another man at the hotel was with me." And I said the smoke was coming out there and the ironing board was flaming, and a woman was screaming, "don't come into the shower." Gordon says, "Gee, too bad you didn't."

We had a lot of fun. And so, I would say that the day is October 2nd, the year 2001. I've had a lot fun getting this paper together. There are probably other things that we remember, but these show you that we did have things going on in Northfield, more probably than I dare tell. And I thank you very much for the opportunity of giving this. Thank you.

A Conversation: Hugh Eastman and Friends
October 2, 2001

Hugh: I came from the town of Haverhill, NH, and a lady has written a new history of the town Haverhill NH. And there were a lot of little mistakes in it, which is bound to happen in any town. But it brought back memories. It's a thick book, its got 739 pages in it. And it tells of different things that I remember. Just to give you a quick idea; I remember when I was 3 years old. My father took me down to a local garage, and we went to the back room there. And there was a bear hanging from the ceiling, and it weighed 285 pounds. But when this lady's history come out, she gave the wrong date; she said 1915. Well, I was born in 1915, so that couldn't have been right. And it mentions several generations of my family. And I remember that we had in Haverhill, NH, a very large railroad station. And I often wondered, I knew it burned at one time. And sure enough, there's a picture of it there in ruins.

We lived near a fire lookout on the edge of the White Mountains, and this man was stationed up there during the summer time. And a bunch of us boys went up there one time and he said, "Would you like to come up here and spend the night?" And I said, "yeah". So he said, "I'll tell you what. Friday night, you go to the store and get me a pack of cigarettes, and two pounds of bacon, and some candy, and come on up." So my mother gave me I guess a dollar of so. I remember distinctly, that the guy asked me about buying the cigarettes, it was only 25 cents for a pack in those days. And he let me take them. We went up and stayed overnight, and it was a great experience. At that time, I did know that he was a veteran of the war. And he said, "Would you like to see my German Luger?" I said, "Yeah". So he had a beautiful German luger pistol. And he let me fire it. And I said, "How did you get this?" "Well," he said, "I can't tell you too many details, but I was out on patrol and I met up with a German, and he was going to shoot me, and I had to do my duty". So he said, "I got the German Luger".

The tower room was just about half the size of this room, and was all enclosed in glass. It was 75 feet above the ground. And I said, "Do you see a lot of strange things at night?" "Well," he said, "the strangest thing was one of the worst thunder storms I believe I ever saw". "And," he said, "after the storm had gone, in the whole perimeter around for miles, I saw seven different sets of buildings burning all at once."

Speaking about storms, I remember a storm we had not too many weeks ago, I think it was the worst storm I ever saw. Seems the lightning was here, over there, and all around. I hate thunder storms. So I guess that's about it.

Someone asks:
Do you remember the hurricane?

Do I remember the hurricane? I was in Chicago, going to a trade school but one of my buddies was in Northfield and had a terrible time. He had recently got married, and his wife was in Providence, Rhode Island, And the school did a lot for him, they contacted the State Police in Providence, and I never did find out whether they found her or not. He became almost a mental case, and the school sent him back to Rhode Island. I don't think anyone at the school probably knew what happened. We were never told. I got out of that, anyway.

James Spaulding asks:
When did you come to Northfield?

Hugh:
When did I come to Northfield? I came in, lets see, 1934. Yeah, in 1934,... in April. No, before that..... In 1929. (Spoken with conviction) We were coming down on Route 10, and run out of gas just before we got to Hinsdale. My uncle went to a farm house and asked the man if he could buy 5 gallons of gas. "No," he says, "you run out of gas? And he said, "I know just what you want to do, you want to get into Massachusetts because the gasoline is cheaper." So my uncle walked down to the gas station, just over the line. And he had a 5 gallon gas can, came up and put it in. Wouldn't charge my uncle anything for bringing the gas up. And I saw this beautiful looking young girl. She had two pony tails. And I thought, boy, she's pretty good-looking. And I talked to her for a few minutes, and I said, "Do you live here?" She said, "I live up on the hill."

Someone (J.S.?) says:
Right in back of Charlie's?

Hugh:
So we went along, and I had a cousin going to the Seminary. Well then, I got into Mount Hermon. I came to Mount Hermon three days after Eliot Speer was killed. And there were more detectives and police then there were students, I think. And then one of our class meetings, the boys had been going over to the girls school for a dance. So the girls invited guys from other schools. So we would get together and go over there to dance. I signed up… I couldn't dance a step. So we drew names, and I had a slip of paper that said: Genevieve Alexander. And so, ok, I met her. And I said, " Do you have two dogs?" And she said, "Yeah." And I said, "Do you remember me?" "Oh," she said, "you were driving and (your uncle ran out of gas." Well there was a school rule that said that you must escort your lady friend home after a dance. So I said, "What dorm do you go to?" And she said, "I'm a town student, I live way up by the state line." And I said, "Well, according to the school rules, I've got to escort you home." She said, "No, you don't have to, but I would like to have you meet my father." So I met her father, and he said, "What are you doing next Saturday night?" I said, "I don't know." "Well I do," he says, "I'll come over and get you if you'd like to see my daughter again." That's the start of the romance. I always remembered the two dogs, too.

Maureen
What's the population difference?

Hugh:
Oh, we've increased.

JES:
It's close to 3,000 now.

Hugh:
About that. Course many years ago, there wasn't a house on South Mountain. A fellow told me the other day, they're building 21 up there now. Julian Black used to get the kids from the high school in a station wagon. Now I understand, they have a big bus. Things have changed a lot.

It wasn't too many years ago that there weren't many houses along Birnam Road.

Ross :
That's right.

Hugh:
Now Dr. Woods built you this house, didn't he?

Ross
Dana Leavis and Lee Bolton built it for Dr. Woods in 1957.

Hugh:
Is Dr Woods still living, I wonder?

Ross:
As far as I know. I could tell you an interesting little story. Three or four summers ago, Carolyn and I were sitting out on the patio, and all of a sudden a man appeared on the sidewalk here, and rapped on the screen. And I went to the door, and it was a very, very embarrassed Dr. Woods. He had lost his wife, and he and a lady friend from the Cape had driven up. And he pulled in at the end of the driveway, got out of the car to take a picture of the house he used to live in, and locked the keys in the car. So I called Triple A for him and they came. But this was three or four years ago. As far as I know, he's still living.

Hugh:
Let me see, he was a dentist.

Ross:
That's correct. His office was up over the Bookstore.

Hugh:
I remember I had a severe double tooth-ache that hurt like the dickens. And my mother-in-law said, "Well, you'd better go down and see Dr. Holton, and I'll call him up." So she called him up and he says, "Have him come right in." So I go down there, and I open my mouth, and he says, "Yeah, that's going to come out." So he gets the old pliers out, and is pulling away. Then he stopped, and says, "Are you the one that married Leon Alexander's youngest daughter?" I says, "Judas Priest, pull the tooth!" (laughter) Oh God, it was hurting, and it was half out! Good old Doc, he was always asking some personal question. Did you marry Leon Alexander's youngest daughter? I told him yes.

James:
Well, dentists always like to get their hands in your mouth, then ask you questions. And then expect an answer.

Ross:
That you can't answer with an mmmhhmm…or something like that.

James:
They just love to do that.

Hugh:
I'm quite interested right now in the Northfield Schools. They're taking on a big building program. I understand they're going to change over a lot. There's going to be a new dormitory between Merrill Keep and Gould for freshman. It's going to be 40 rooms. And over at Hermon, they're going to build a hockey rink. Another hockey rink, a field house, and a new gym.

James:
They just built a new gym, fairly recently.

Ross:
Well, on the Northfield campus.

James:
At Hermon too.

Hugh:
And then another rumor I heard yesterday, the other day, was that they're going back to the old system where they're going to have Freshman and Sophomores at Hermon, and Juniors and Seniors here. And do away with the bussing. Bussing is expensive.

Maureen:
I believe that they leave every hour.

Ross:
Is that right? Sometimes I see two; it must be more students that…

Maureen:
Well, they also hire a charter bus that goes to the basketball games.

James:
Between the two schools …

Maureen:
Oh yeah, they have one at Hermon that comes here and one that goes back every hour, so they're constantly going all day.

Hugh:
Rod Hungerford told me that the first year they rented, $81,000 bus bill.

Hugh:
Oh yeah, it's a lot of money.

Maureen:
Right now, they've got the number of boys and girls pretty much mixed; they're about equal on both campuses. So you think they're going to switch back with boys on one campus and girls on the other?

Hugh:
I don't know. This person seemed to know what he was talking about. The plan was, they're going to be divided by classes: freshman, sophomores at Hermon, juniors, seniors over here.

Ross:
I had heard that also. I understand they spent a lot of money. For instance, at the Northfield campus, where it used to be all girls now that there're boys, they had to put in urinals, they had to do a lot of work in that regard. And by the same token on the Hermon campus, they had to do a lot of work to make it coed.

Hugh:
There were a lot of things they had to change that they didn't realize. And I still laugh about it, but here a few years ago, some of the alumni didn't like the way West Hall looked. So they lowered the ceilings and did a lot of revamping: $850,000. About two years ago, another alumnus didn't like it and wanted it to go back, so now, it's the same way that it was.

Maureen:
What's the name of it? Is it West Hall, or is it Alumni Hall?

Hugh:
It's Alumni now.

Maureen:
They were trying to call it West Hall.

James:
If you didn't have a tie on, if you came to class without a tie, out you'd go.

Maureen:
What did T.D. stand for?

Hugh:
Thomas Donnelly

James:
I had him. He gave me the lowest grades I had, all the time I was at Hermon. 62, 65, something like that. Then when I got my final grade, it was 85. I saw him at one of the conferences in summer. I said, "Mr. Donovan, how can, how do you explain this? The highest grade I had gotten was perhaps a 70 from a different marking period, and I wind up with an 85?" He said, "You'll notice, that every time it was getting up a little higher. If the class would go on for another year or so, you'd have been up to an 85." (laughter)

Hugh:
But we were lucky. I don't know how this faculty rates. It's none of my business. It used to be, if you had T.D., or Louis Smith, and went to Yale, a lot of Hermon Alumni never took English I for their freshman year. They said, you had T.D., or Louis Smith, we don't want to bother with you, you don't need it, and get credit for it.

James:
He was rough, but he was good.

Hugh:
Ross remembers old Pop Bowman. One time he went by the garage, and Ray Thompson says. "There goes Pop Bowman." Paul says, "Yeah, the only Ford that Spencer ever sold that second gear was never used." That's the way he went, wasn't it? Started low, and shifted into high.

Ross:
During World War II when gas rationing was on, he'd go out once a week and start his car and sit there and read the paper to keep the battery charged up. The rest of the teachers at Hermon were so upset, they didn't have gas enough to go anywhere, and Dr. Bowman was out there reading his paper.

Hugh:
He was the only PHD teacher I believe we ever had when I went to school. But we had a lot of teachers that were well known in other colleges.

Unknown:
Mr. Hatch?

Hugh:
Railroad Hatch. Roy Raymond Hatch.

Unknown:
Now what about him? Was he a good teacher?

James:
He was a good teacher.

Hugh:
And he was of the old school. One time we had a terrible thunderstorm during assembly, and the lightning hit the underground cable between the Gym and recitation Hall. And Carol Rikert was in charge of buildings, and of course he was a graduate of Harvard Business School. And we told him there was no power coming to Overton Hall, but it did stop at the Gym. So he said, well.. he had a famous chuckle and so he came out and he had all kinds of dials and everything you can think of. And he was going to locate where the cable had been cut by the lightning. So he goes all around and gosh, he was there for three or four hours. Roy Hatch came along and says, "What's going on?" And he says, "My boss said the lightning struck the cable last night somewhere between the Gym and Overton and this man's from Harvard, and he can't seem to find it. Roy says, "Well that don't take much brains." And the guy kind of looked at him, probably thinking, what does this guy know? So Roy says, "I'll be back to deal with this." And he came back with a bunch of wires and some kind of gadget, put it together from trunk of his car , turned around and said it's right here.... "It's right there?." And the fellow says, "It can't be there. It's got to be over here somewhere." Roy says, "Right there." So he said to Charlie Mayberry, "Give me two boys and good shovels." Charlie says, "There's a couple right here." "Ok," he says, "dig here." They went down about 7 feet to the cable, and there it was.

James:
If there were any physical problems anywhere on the campus, nobody knew where the cables went and so forth, they'd ask Roy Hatch, and he'd know exactly where everything was. He'd be called out of class to repair the electrical systems.

Hugh:
Speaking about Roy Hatch, not many weeks ago, I got my old yearbook out, and in 1936, he was the oldest faculty member. He was appointed by Henry Cutler in the 1890's, not too long after the school started.

Maureen:
I've seen old pictures, and there weren't very many trees on the campus, but its so pretty now with all the big trees. I've noticed now , it's taken all this time for them to grow, and now they're cutting them down. They cut down three trees in the last month down on Winchester Road, and I can't get an answer as to why they're doing it.

Hugh:
Well I'll tell you one reason why they cut some there by the Auditorium, because they were dead. And a lot of faculty have small children, and the mothers wouldn't let them walk on the sidewalk because they're afraid they'd break.

Hugh:
We have a lot of dead trees on campus, terrible.

Maureen:
Because of salt damage?

Hugh:
For the simple reason when Sonny Severance retired, they didn't hire anybody that could climb a tree.

Carolyn
Problem is you really need an expert, an arborist up there.

Hugh:
That's right. But I had a lot of funny times at the school.

Maureen:
Did you enjoy the Peter, Paul, and Mary concert last week?

Hugh:
Oh yes. It really brought memories back. The way it used to be.

Maureen:
I'm working there now, and I've a student that works with me on Saturday from Korea. And I said, "Are you going to the concert?" And he said, "I don't know who they are." And I said, "Well, that makes me old."

Ross:
Well, I noticed, Hugh, that you said that there weren't many students there in the audience.

Hugh:
They've been singing for 41 years.

Maureen:
More that half the students at the school, I think, are from other countries.

Ross:
That big a percentage?

Maureen:
According to last year's report I looked at, we have children from Mainland China, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, a lot of kids from Korea.
James:
I think 40-something different countries.

Maureen:
Yeah. Brazil, even one from Dutch West Indies. That's just amazing. And so you're getting this world culture that is so interesting. Because you're getting all these different flavors of things. And they're not becoming American, because they're going to go back to their countries. But they're learning some things on a world level. So it's really interesting.

Carolyn:
Wasn't the school founded originally to educate local students?

Maureen:
Well I think it still is because there are more day students from Northfield than the other towns. Of course you get foreign students, but then there are a lot of day students that actually have dorm telephone numbers, but they don't stay overnight. They give them telephone numbers so that other students that call them.

Ross:
Did you live on campus when you went there?

Hugh:
Yeah, I was in Crossley Hall.

Ross:
I was a day student, and I really didn't feel part of the school.

James:
I never was a part of the school as a day student.

Maureen:
But they are really working on that a lot. Also, every child has a faculty member assigned to them.

Hugh:
Well we did back when I was there. Each student had a faculty member. I remember I had Lester White.

Ross:
Did I have a mentor? I don't remember.

Maureen:
So you went to Hermon too?

Ross:
Yes I did.

James:
But as day students, we arranged our classes so we had them all in the morning, and had the afternoons off. So we missed out on the sports. I didn't have any sports.

Maureen:
Now, you have to work; I understand that you have to have a job on campus.

Ross:
Well, the day students didn't when I went there. I guess they do now. Yes, because our daughter went there.

Carolyn:
Linda worked in the kitchen.

Ross:
That's right.

Carolyn:
In the morning, she would go in during the breakfast hour.

Hugh:
An interesting thing about that. My boss, Duncan Campbell was driving the bus one night with a bunch of girls. One of the girls said, "I don't like my job." And he said, "Well, what's your job?" She said, "I have to go in and clean the stools in the bathroom. I'm going to talk to my faculty member, and if I have to do that,

I think I'll resign." Duncan says, "Young lady, I want to ask you something. Who cleans the stools at your house?" She said, "My mother." He said, "Too bad for you." He said she shut up then.

When I went there, I had to work ten hours a week. I got up at five thirty in the morning and took care of the young stock down on the farms. I liked it because at seven o'clock, I was all through with work, I had the whole rest of the day. I only had to have two subjects to pass, so I became a working student. And I was living a life of Reilly I was night watchman at Crossley Hall, we had to be on duty from nine at night till six in the morning. And I had my board, room and laundry, tuition, and 45 dollars a month, which was good money back in 1936. I bought a radio, rode a bicycle, I had a great time.

Ross:
I don't know about 1936, but my dad graduated I think in 1922, and at that time, you went to school for so long, so many weeks, and then you worked. And then you'd come back and go to school.

Hugh:
We had quite a few working students.

Ross:
So it wasn't a regular school year as today.

Maureen:
The farm is still active. They're boiling cider and in the spring they make maple syrup. It's very busy. And it's really neat that they still have the farming thing, I think.

James:
They didn't for a while.

Maureen:
You can't forget where your food comes from. Whoever you are, I think farming is important.

Ross:
But you know it's an interesting thing. We talk about all these foreign students. I'm sure there are some royalty and some very wealthy people, and you talk about cleaning the stools, that some of these people had hand servants or something at home, and they come here and have to work…..

Maureen:
Well, the student that's working with me, he said that he didn't want to work in the kitchen. He didn't come last week because he had to stay up and do something Friday night, but he was supposed to be at work 8:30 to clean in the morning, and he didn't show up at all. So last Saturday, he got demerits, and after he was done with his job with me, he had to go to the kitchen. And his English is very minimal. He's writing his student notes in Korean, and he's typing in English on the computer, and he's answering the phone and trying to figure out which language he's in at the moment.

Maureen:
I have a friend, and she taught at Eaglebrook over in Deerfield, and she's retired now. She told me that she taught Bill Cosby's son, the one that was killed in California. And she remembered Mr. Cosby calling her up…or she called Mr. Cosby up and said "I'm really having a hard time with your son." And he said, "Ok." So next time he went home, Mr. Cosby called her up and said, "I just want you to know, I took him back to the Woods shed." And she said, "Thank you." And that was it. After that, she never had a problem with him.

Ross:
Well, that's part of the problem today, I think, is that the parents leave all the discipline to the school and the teachers, and the teachers can't afford to use the ruler, or what all on the students.

Hugh:
You know there's a lot of things that happen at the schools that are really ridiculous They can't allow fires in the school. And they had a big storage building down below the farms. One Saturday night it burned, and

Monday's Greenfield Recorder came out as the storage building burned. And said it was definitely an electrical fire. And many of us old timers, we had to laugh, because they never had any wires in the place. But the sad thing was the following Saturday, Silliman Laboratory burned. That's the time we had a football game. The game continued while the building burned. Remember the picture?

Maureen:
That picture went out to all the newspapers all over the country.

Hugh:
As a matter of fact, I found a reprint the other day. It says the biggest fire in Franklin County in 1965. I saw a boy run out of Silliman Lab just as the fire started. Ernie Phelps. Do you remember Ernie? Ernie saw him too. So he told some of the guards. He said, "That's the same boy that was seen down at the cold storage."

Ross:
I never heard that.

Hugh:
I understand that he made threats afterwards towards the school. Somebody told me long ago that he was still in some kind of a minimum security.. But Roy Hatch said that he probably was the smartest kid at Hermon as far as physics. We always heard of a lot of strange things.

Maureen:
Well there were two girls from Gould that were killed in the hurricane. If you're interested, there's a documentary about the hurricane that's showing at the Library. Some of the people that actually participated in some of the logging companies are coming up from West Virginia, but they're all coming in a bus and offered to do a presentation.

Ross:
Did they set a date?

Maureen:
Yes, October 27. The program is called "Out of the Storm" and there is a video available at Dickinson Memorial Library.

The Northfield Chateau

The Northfield Inn 1905

The Auditorium 1804

91 Main St. 'The Beehive'

180 Main St. Valley Vista Inn

187 Main St. The Northfield Hospital

Pine Street School - District #2

104 Main St. Former High School

19 Moody St. - Northfield Schools Bookst

57 Main St. Northfield Grange #3

105 Main Street Spencer Brothers

97 Main St. Bill's Gas Station

Barnes Auto - Mt. Hermon Station Rd.

60 Main St. - Former A+P Grocery

190 Main St. - Former Jordan Motor Sls